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Doctor Grace

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Background Statement

Before we start, I would like to mention that when I reflect on my educational upbringing and expectations, I will be focusing on high school rather than earlier since my recollection is fuzzy in those aspects. I never really understood what the education system expected from me, unless it was to simply graduate and get my diploma, or even the business world. There’s a definite shift nowadays, as it seems trade schools and manual labor are becoming more popular than going to college. But that was all swept aside between my own expectations and that of my parents. Ever since the age of three, my mother stressed how important education was and that I was destined to go to college. I was very intelligent; everything came easily to me. I never really took high school seriously, because I knew this was only a stepping stone to my future. With that being said, I still expected myself to produce great work, and I did; I graduated in the top ten of my class, made National Honor’s Society, and received the Mitchell Scholarship.

Classrooms were set up differently, according to the preference of the teacher. Some were set up into rows, others were in groups or clusters, and some were simply scattered with no real clarity. I think the different setups affected the different strategies the teachers used. The teacher with the rows used more quizzes and more of a lecture type approach, while the teachers with the groups had more discussions and seminars. The scattered ones were the ones that I had the biggest problem with, because there was no true organization and it left me in a state of confusion. I really enjoyed the groups and the discussions. It made me feel like I could voice my opinion and formulate new ideas. I had the most growth in those classes, but my biggest growth was in my AP Literature class. My teacher, Ms. Doughty, was phenomenal. The way she was able to cater to my needs and help me process my own thinking guided me throughout the rest of school. She is one of the main reasons why I want to become an English teacher. She pushed me more than any other teacher has, and I was forced to work for my grade instead of being handed it. The feeling of hard work and pride was great, and ever since then I really pursued pushing myself even more to obtain that feeling of satisfaction.

I believe most of my school was working class, and 99% Caucasian. There really wasn’t much diversity, as I went to school in a very small and secluded town. We had a lot of good programs though, like football, basketball, even baseball. Granted, I’m not a huge fan of organized sports, but they did bring in a lot of money for the school. Since athletics dominated the town and school, I really do not know if there were any other extracurricular activities that the school offered. The classes themselves were decent, as I made it worthwhile for myself, especially if I did not typically enjoy a class. We were given a lot of electives to choose from, and I took advantage of that whenever I could, taking Anatomy and Senior Writing for my pleasure and benefit. From my experience in high school, I had figured out who I do not want to be as an educator. I have seen teachers humiliate students callously, seen teachers disrespect students for their opinions, and I never want to be that way.

I consider myself a very strong and influential individual. My upbringing was not pleasant or easy, and has molded me into who I am today. I stay true to my convictions without jamming them down anyone’s throat, and I believe I had a true message that needs to and should be shared to everyone, especially the younger generations. I chose to become an educator so I could deliver that message, to show people that being smart and taking the high road in life is a lot more luxurious than partying or being promiscuous; that voicing your opinion doesn’t make you a martyr; that staying true to yourself is a lot more admirable than conforming to what everyone else wants; that making mistakes doesn’t mean you’re a failure, but you are learning for yourself.

A superior teacher is one that holds students to higher standards than what is expected, and accountable for their actions. Without expecting the best of students, how can a teacher expect them to feel the same way? You cannot accept or make excuses for them, but hold them accountable to everything. From late work to being disrespectful, if a teacher makes rules or consequences they need to be enforced. Otherwise, there will be no respect, and behavior as such will not be acceptable in the real world. With that being said, a superior teacher needs to be compassionate and empathetic. No one is completely perfect; mistakes will be made, and expectations will not be met. They need to be there when the students need it most, and show them unconditional love regardless. I believe teaching is a lot like parenting. If your child makes a mistake, you don’t deem them hopeless and forget about them. It’s constant effort from the teacher and student to make an effective educational experience.

Growth is very important to me. When I become an educator, I want to grow as an individual. I want to learn from my students as much as they learn from me. I want to expand my horizons and understandings of anything: culture, ethnicity, what’s important to them, their hobbies and interest. I never want to stop learning just because I run the classroom. I am very unfamiliar with the politics and the system of education, but I do know it is far from perfect. I hope to someday be able to change it and make an impact at the higher level.

My fears are of the unknown. I haven’t had the best experiences in Practicum or in some of my education classes, so a lot of the time my faith was shaken and tested. Sometimes I doubt myself and my potential, because I don’t know what my potential is. I haven’t had many opportunities to push myself and test the waters of my teaching abilities, so when you don’t know, you don’t know. I know these fears will go away once I have my own classroom. I just have to jump in, both feet, and know I can tread water.

It is also frightening to deal with the actual system of education. I don’t know how it operates, or the politics behind it; it’s all new to me. I feel vulnerable, like a newborn lamb in a field of wolves. Sometimes I feel unprepared, which isn’t a good feeling, especially being this is my senior year. But I always have faith in myself, and I continue to push forward, regardless of how hard or how terrifying the road may be. Everything happens for a reason, and I know that whatever happens in the field, whatever experiences I have, were all meant to be.